

Message Text

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S E C R E T JERUSALEM 1443

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAAGS: PBOR, PORG, UNSC, PLO, IS, LE, XF
SUBJECT: SOUTH LEBANON - GUYER TRIP AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
UNNY AND THE FIELD

REF: (A) JERUSALEM 1434, (B) DAMASCUS 2931, (C) BEIRUT 2844

SUMMARY: JONAH CONSIDERS SIILASVUO, ERSKINE AND PRIETO TO BE ONE-SIDED IN THEIR INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE AND INSISTS THEY BE EVEN-HANDED IN THE FUTURE. HE BELIEVES UNIFIL MUST NOT APPEAR ANTI-PLO OR PRO-CHRISTIAN IN ORDER NOT TO DESTROY FRAGILE POLITICAL CONSENSUS IN SC. JONAH ALSO CONSIDERS ARAFAT'S OFFER TO CO-EXIST WITH UNIFIL IF NON-MILITARY SUPPLIES ARE PERMITTED THROUGH UN LINES TO BE TEMPTING. HOWEVER, ERSKINE IS RESISTING UN'S ACQUIESENCE IN ARAFAT'S PROPOSAL. END SUMMARY.

1. MET WITH JONAH FOR ONE HOUR MAY 22. DIFFERENCES OF APPROACH BETWEEN HIMSELF AND GUYER ON ONE HAND AND SILLASVUO/
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ERSKINE/PRIETO ON THE OTHER AS TO INTERPRETATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UNIFIL'S MANDATE WERE EVIDENT. JONAH SAID UNIFIL APPEARED TO BE ANTI-PALESTINIAN AND PRO-CHRISTIAN. THIS COULD DESTROY FRAGILE POLITICAL CONSENSUS IN SC. (JONAH APPEARED TO BE REACTING IN PART TO MANY CRITICAL COMMENTS HE HAD RECEIVED IN CORRIDORS FROM ARAB DELEGATIONS.)

2. IN MAY 21 MEETING WITH ARAFAT IN DAMASCUS, GUYER AND JONAH HAD FOUND HIM IN EXTREMELY ANGRY FRAME OF MIND. ARAFAT MADE FOLLOWING PROPOSALS:

(A) HE WAS PREPARED NOT TO USE CAIRO ACCORD AS A BASIS FOR PLO'S RIGHT TO INFILTRATE SOUTH LEBANON.

(B) HE WAS ALSO PREPARED TO CO-EXIST WITH UNIFIL PROVIDED NON-LETHAL SUPPLIES WERE PERMITTED TO REACH PALESTINIANS NOW BEHIND UNIFIL'S FORWARD LINES.

(C) IF (B) IMPLEMENTED, ARAFAT WAS READY TO GIVE ASSURANCES PLO WOULD NOT LAUNCH ATTACKS AGAINST ISRAEL FROM SOUTH LEBANON.

(D) IF NECESSARY, ARAFAT WAS FURTHER PREPARED TO LET UNIFIL TAKE OVER NON-MILITARY SUPPLIES AT CROSSING POINTS AND CONTROL THEIR DISTRIBUTION IN THE REAR.

(E) IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, ARAFAT WOULD PERMIT UNIFIL TO SURROUND PALESTINIANS IN ITS AREA OF OPERATIONS.

3. ARAFAT COUPLED OFFER WITH A THREAT. HE COULD NOT LET HIS MEN STARVE AND IF UNIFIL WOULD NOT COOPERATE, THEN HE WOULD BE OBLIGED TO PREVENT UN ELEMENTS FROM CROSSING PLO LINES AND PERHAPS TAKE OTHER (UNSPECIFIED) MEASURES.

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4. APPARENTLY, SIILASVUO AND ERSKINE RESISTED ARAFAT'S PROPOSALS AS CONTRARY TO SYG'S MARCH 19 REPORT TO SC.

5. JONAH TOLD ERSKINE IF HE WOULD SEND REPORT TO UNNY STATING PALESTINIANS IN SOUTH LEBANON WERE RECENT INFILTRATORS AND NOT STAY-BEHINDS, THEN THIS WOULD GIVE SYG JUSTIFICATION TO PREVENT THEIR SUPPLY.

6. JONAH CONFIRMED GOL WILL PERMIT GUYER TO REPORT THAT AS LONG AS UNIFIL'S MANDATE IS IN EFFECT, GOL CONSIDERS CAIRO AGREEMENT TO BE SUPERCEDED. IT WAS OBVIOUS, JONAH SAID, GOL WOULD NOT HELP UNIFIL MILITARILY. SARKIS HAD SAID IF LAF UNITS SENT SOUTH, THEY WOULD EITHER CLASH WITH PALESTINIANS OR JOIN HADDAD. ("IN ANY CASE," JONAH COMMENTED, "SARKIS, BOUTROS AND KHOURY REPRESENT ONLY THE CHRISTIAN FACTION" HE REMARKED UN REPS IN BEIRUT SAW ONLY CHRISTIAN MINISTERS AND DID NOT SEE ENOUGH OF MOSLEMS SUCH AS PM HOSS.)

7. JONAH WAS ALSO UPSET WITH ISRAELI PRESS REPORTS TO EFFECT UNIFIL HAD ASSURED HADDAD CHRISTIANS WOULD NOT BE DISARMED.

WHEN I QUESTIONED HIM AS TO WHETHER SUCH A COMMITMENT HAD IN FACT BEEN MADE, JONAH REPLIED REPORTS WERE ACCURATE REFLECTION OF VIEWS HELD BY SIILASVUO AND PRIETO.

8. JONAH SAID HE UNDERSTOOD AND IS SYMPATHETIC WITH PROBLEM FACED BY COMMANDERS WHO HAD TO COPE ON THE GROUND WITH INFILTRATION ATTEMPTS. ON THE OTHER HAND, UNIFIL MUST FIND A WAY TO CURB HOSTILE ELEMENTS WHILE APPEARING TO BE EVEN-HANDED.

9. CONCERNING ERSKINE'S REQUIREMENT FOR A PLITICAL ADVISER, JONAH SAID JEAN CLAUSE AIME (HAITI), A FORMER UNDP OFFICIAL IN AMMAN, WOULD BE ASSIGNED SHORTLY. JONAH THINKS HIGHLY OF AIME'S POLITICAL JUDGMENT.

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10. AS FOR THE SYRIANS, JONAH SAID IT WAS CLEAR THEY DID NOT WANT TO BECOME INVOLVED IN UNIFIL'S PROBLEMS. THEY WERE UNWILLING TO EVACUATE ZAHRANI AND THOUGHT UNIFIL HQ SHOULD BE SOUTH OF THE LITANI.

11. COMMENT: CLEARLY JONAH IS NERVOUS AS TO WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE SYG'S POTENTIAL VULNERABILITY TO CHARGES UNIFIL IS ANTI-PLO AND THAT IT IS DOING ISRAEL'S BUSINESS. HE IS ALSO WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE ATTACKS BY PALESTINIANS ON UNIFIL. FINALLY, HE IS CONCERNED LEAST UN OFFICIALS INADVERTENTLY OR OTHERWISE GIVE ISRAELIS ASSURANCES RE INFILTRATION OR THE CHRISTIANS WHICH THEY MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO DELIVER THEREBY ENABLING GOI TO RENEGE ON JUNE 13 DATE. I REMARKED THAT GOI DECISION TO WITHDRAW BY JUNE 13 SHOULD HELP POLITICAL CLIMATE AND I WONDERED WHETHER ARAFAT OR ANY ONE ELSE REASONABLY RESPONSIBLE WOULD DO ANYTHING TO COMPLICATE FINAL WITHDRAWAL. JONAH AGREED BUT CONTINUED TO EXPRESS GRAVE CONCERN OVER WHAT HE CONSIDERED TO BE UNIFIL'S POLITICAL AND MILITARY VULNERABILITIES.

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